

St. John's Episcopal Church  
Southwest corner of Main Street and  
Baptist Corner Road  
Ashfield  
Franklin County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-648

HABS  
MASS  
6-ASH  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HABS  
MASS  
6-ASH

Location: Southwest corner of Main Street and Baptist Corner Road, Ashfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts. 2-

Present Owner: The Corporation of the Protestant Episcopal Parish of St. John's Church in Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Present Occupant: The Parish of St. John's Church.

Present Use: Church.

Brief Statement of Significance: A small village church, this structure has been the center of Episcopal religious activity for over a century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: It has always belonged to the Parish of St. John's Church in Ashfield, Massachusetts.
2. Date of erection: Nov. 13, 1823, voted to take measures for building church. 1824 - timber cut, work begun. Cornerstone laid April 4, 1825. Completed December 23, 1827; consecrated October 1828.
2. Builder: Johnathan Lilly (clerk) was the master builder.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: 1834 - first organ installed in gallery. 1844 - church was painted. About 1855 - chancel was built. 1860 - present organ installed in gallery, later moved to present location south of chancel and new robing room made in opposite corner. 1887 - bell installed, and building repaired. 1921 - Anne Combe Owen memorial window installed. 1923 - plastering and interior woodwork repaired and painted.
4. Sources of above information: C. A. Hall & G. Stockwell, One Hundred Years at Saint John's Church, Ashfield, Mass. (Greenfield, Mass: printed by E. A. Hall & Co., 1932), p. 23 ff.

Frederick G. Howes, History of the Town of Ashfield, Franklin County, Mass., 1742-1910 (Ashfield, Mass., 1912).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: An unpretentious village church of the early 19th century, relatively unchanged.
2. Condition of Fabric: Generally good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: One story, with small gallery. Auditorium layout. Approximately 35' x 67'.
2. Foundations: Very low. Brick exposed above grade, field stone below.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, clapboards (scarf-joined). Prominent corner boards.
4. Tower: Centered on front, over vestibule. Square, relatively low, with simple balustrade at top. "Pinnacles" at corners. Restored in 1948.
5. Chimneys: Small chimney, apparently a later addition, cuts through center of gallery. Brick.
6. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main doorway double, simple 6-panel doors; pilasters and entablature. Side door on north, modern 6-panel.
  - b. Windows and shutters: 15/20 double hung sash, with pointed-arch head above. Shutters with louvers. Moulded wood trim, simple wood sills. Half-windows either side of vestibule projection. Three small stained glass windows in chancel; one stained glass window (dated 1920) to right of chancel. Other windows plain.
7. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable. Slate covered.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Simple, strongly projecting cornice; heavy corona, bed mouldings. Cornice returned at ends of building, carries up along rake of gable.
  - c. Dormers: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plan: Rectangular auditorium, with narrow chancel at west end, small curved gallery at east end. Two-story vestibule, narrower than body of church, at east end, on which tower rests. Two doric columns support gallery. Chancel was built some years after the main portion of the church.
2. Stairways: Small closed stair, very simple, to second floor of vestibule, at north end of vestibule.
3. Flooring: Wide boards, carpeted over. Much of floor framing replaced and strengthened; evidence of old hewn girders, with heavy log joists widely spaced.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on split lath; painted. Cove ceiling; chancel has pointed cove.
5. Doorways and doors: 4-panel; no mouldings.
6. Trim: Wainscoting of horizontal boarding. Moulded wood trim at doors and windows. Chancel arch framed with pilasters, elliptical arch. Wooden bench pews; two aisles; boarding down middle of church divides central benches. Simple chancel rail, with straight square balusters. Wood cornice of balcony has modillions resembling crockets. Simple plank bench built into vestibule wall.
7. Hardware: Simple butts. Door knobs. Old iron lock on main door, and thumb-latch.
8. Lighting: Electric; no old fixtures.
9. Heating: Central now (oil furnace). Evidence that a stove was used at one time, but no evidence of any heating at time of original building.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: On village corner, church faces east.
2. Enclosures: Open.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect  
National Park Service  
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